

Netball Shoe Fact Sheet

Netball is a unique sport in that it places many and varied demands on the body. Frequent stopping and starting, twisting, pivoting, and jumping combined with a hard, often slippery surface, places high stresses on the legs and feet, often causing injury.

Therefore choosing the correct netball shoe is imperative in preventing injury, and also in aiding performance. The following are a few simple guidelines you can follow in choosing the correct netball shoe.

A Firm Heel Counter




A simple test involves placing downward pressure on the back of the shoe. A suitable shoe shouldn't fold under reasonable pressure from your hand.

A Firm Shank/Midsole

As our feet naturally bend across the ball of the foot, so too should our shoe we wear. Excessive flexibility in the middle portion of the shoe should not be present. A simple test for flexibility involves trying to bend the shoe in two with an upwards pressure at the heel and toe. Commonly shoes with "cut outs" in the midsole are included to make the shoe lighter, however this compromises strength and support.

The Last (sole) of the Shoe

This is dependent entirely on the individual's foot type. Generally, an individual who pronates (rolls in) needs a straight last shoe, and those who don't, a semi curved last. However it is a difficult area to assess as an individual, and therefore you should consult your sports footwear specialist or health professional. Also, anti pronatory shoes (more common in running shoes) have a dual density midsole. This allows the shoe to shock absorb at Heel Strike, and also prevent (to an extent) "rolling in" late in stance phase.

Straight Last	The straight last as the name implies, is almost perfectly straight. This is the most supportive style of last and is recommended to over-pronators	
Semi Curved Last	This has a slight curve compared to the straight last and provides some medial (inside) support. Although not as much as the straight last.	
Curved Last	Having the greatest curve, this last provides the least amount of support to the inside of the foot. It is the most responsive, flexible and mobile of the last types. Curved lasts are mainly found in lightweight trainers or racing shoes.	



Breathability

The shoe should breathe. Adequate ventilation minimises the accumulation of perspiration. This can lead to tinea and bacterial infections of the feet. 'Airing' of the shoes and insoles regularly is imperative in avoiding such infections. Leather or combination leather/synthetic uppers provide such ventilation.

The Outsole

The outsole of the shoe must offer good traction. Gum Rubber or Rubber based materials with durable pivot point inserts for those sudden movements are best. Polyurethane is lighter but offers less traction. Also, since netball players hit the court sometimes at a force up to 4-5 times body weight, shoes must have extra midsole cushioning and shock absorption in the heel and forefoot..

Please remember however that individual shoe needs may vary to the afore-mentioned criteria. If you are uncertain, make sure you get your shoes professionally fitted at a sports footwear specialist or by a health professional.